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9 May 1962

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Laos: Communist forces apparently are moving rapidly to exploit their success at Nam Tha. They have occupied Vien Pou Kha, 35 miles southwest of Nam Tha on the trail to Ban Houei Sai, a key government strong point located on the Thai border. Government troops withdrawing from Nam Tha reportedly have established a new command post at Ban Ta Keo, five miles to the south of Vien Pou Kha. It is doubtful, however, that they could offer serious resistance to any determined enemy advance on Ban Houei Sai.

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Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, meanwhile, has turned down a British request for Soviet participation in a joint appeal by the Geneva cochairman to the International Control Commission for an early report on the Nam Tha incident. After claiming that such a request was unnecessary in view of the fact that the Commission was already on the scene, Gromyko contended that the

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Pathet Lao was "forced to repulse the sallies of Phoumi's troops" in order to curb the "arrogance" of the Vientiane leader.

In Vientiane, Acting Foreign Minister Sisouk na Champassak told Ambassador Brown that his government would submit a strong protest to the International Control Commission and would demand the return of Nam Tha to government control. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
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Netherlands-Indonesia: Foreign Minister Luns on 7 May offered to resume secret discussions with Indonesia provided both parties were free to bring up on the agenda all items they might deem relevant. He warned, however, that willingness to discuss the Bunker proposal did not mean that his government would agree to hand over the administration of West New Guinea to Indonesia without satisfactory guarantees

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for Papuan self-determination. Luns was skeptical of Indonesian good faith with regard to this issue and doubted that a basis for useful negotiations could be found.]

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The Netherlands offer is unlikely to be acceptable to President Sukarno. The absence of both Sukarno and Subandrio from Djakarta will delay an Indonesian response. Sukarno has continued to insist that he will negotiate only on the basis of the transfer of West New Guinea administration to Indonesia. Once the Dutch have made this concession, he will discuss other matters. The Dutch offer opens the way, however, for a new round of approaches to the two governments and could improve the chances for a resumption of the talks.]

In Moscow, Foreign Minister Subandrio reportedly has concluded still another military aid agreement with the USSR. Although details are not yet available, the agreement may be a relatively minor one and intended chiefly for its political impact on the West New Guinea dispute.]

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Congo: [UN officials in the Congo have sought to use the present recess in the Adoula-Tshombé talks to clarify substantive differences prior to a resumption of negotiations. Senior UN representative Robert Gardiner returned to Leopoldville on 7 May to report to Adoula concerning his conversations with Tshombé.]

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UN officials have recently met with Adoula in an attempt to work out "fallback" negotiating positions for the central government and to infuse more flexibility into Adoula's proposals. A major area of disagreement remains the degree of autonomy to be accorded the provinces

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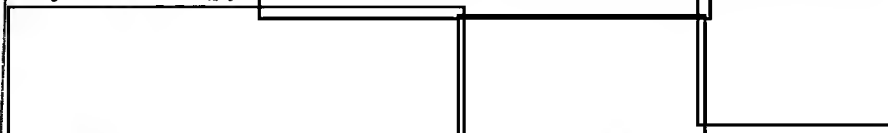


[Redacted]
Czechoslovakia: [Redacted] Protest demonstrations against shortages of meats and quality foods were staged by over 300 university students in Prague during the evening of 1 May, [Redacted] The students chanted slogans blaming the shortages on Czech economic aid to foreign countries, particularly Cuba, the Communist economic system, and the country's leaders. [Redacted]

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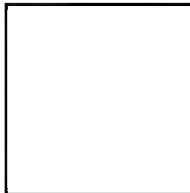


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[Redacted] Popular discontent has been growing in recent months because of the poor food supply situations. During late April the US Embassy in Prague received reports that riots caused by frayed tempers had occurred in queues outside foodstores in Kladno, Bratislava, and Ostrava.]

[Although regime attempts to alleviate the shortages so far have been ineffectual, the party leadership has demonstrated a sensitivity to the popular mood and has sought to reassure the public that the situation is only temporary. In what is apparently an effort to encourage the peasants to step up food deliveries, the regime has been soft-pedaling the long-heralded elimination of private plots and now says this measure must be considered only as a gradual process.] [Redacted]

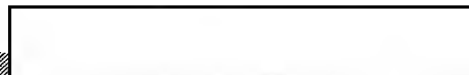
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Laos

The Pathet Lao, in its propaganda, is attempting to capitalize on the shock to the Vientiane government over recent military setbacks. A Pathet Lao broadcast of 8 May attributes the government's loss of Nam Tha to mutiny and fright among the Phoumi troops, following the earlier "coup d'etat" at Muong Sing. Propaganda exhorting Laotian army personnel to cease following orders of the "Phoumi-US clique" and join the ranks of the "patriotic forces" has intensified. A warning in a recent broadcast that the Vientiane forces will meet with "as great a defeat as at Nam Tha" if Phoumi persists in obstructing a coalition government suggests that the Pathet Lao may envisage additional "coups" occurring against the government.

The government troops withdrawing from Nam Tha, having destroyed their heavy weapons can probably offer only token resistance to an enemy advance. Their aim apparently is to regroup at Ban Houei Sai, the government's alternate command post for northern Laos. Government strength is estimated at 3,000 men, but this number may be raised by later arrivals of cutoff units and stragglers. The former garrison at Nam Tha totaled close to 5,000 men, but at least two of the eight battalions involved are believed to have been separated from the main body in the withdrawal. [REDACTED]

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